TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

CONVOCATION NUMBER

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The Church and the Rural-Urban Fringe

TRUMAN B. DOUGLASS

• What is the rural-urban fringe? It refers to an area where city life and country life, city ways and country ways, meet. In this meeting they occasionally blend; more often they conflict; and perhaps most often they clash in such a way as to cancel each other out.

There are serveral quite objective things to be said about the rural-urban fringe.

First, the recognition of the fringe area as an important social phenomenon in America is quite recent among students of society—probably not more than twenty years old. The interpenetration of rural and urban is a relatively new phenomenon in American society.

Second, the sociologists are not wholly in agreement as to how this type of area should be defined. The most widely recognized criterion appears to be the use of the land. In one study of the territory around Detroit it was decided that any township in which the rural non-village non-farm population was fifty percent or more should be considered as belonging to the rural-urban fringe. Samuel Blizzard in his study of the fringe areas around Williamsport, Pennsylvania, considered as the outer boundary of the fringe the place where an urban pattern of living and land-use of some concentration yielded to a pattern of widely scattered acreage lots with nonfarm type houses amid farms or to the use of land purely for farming and forestry. The inner boundary was the place where city services ceased to be complete.

Third, the rural-urban fringe is the scene of the largest proportionate growth in the numbers of American people. During the last census decade and since, the greatest increase of population has occurred in the so-called "rural non-farm" category.

Fourth, it is certain that for many years to come the fringe will continue to loom steadily larger in the picture of American society. By 1975, three-quarters of all the people in the nation will be living in urban areas. Because the population movement is toward the urban areas but at the same time away from the central city, because many of the older suburbs are approaching the saturation point, it seems clear that while 85 percent of the urban growth predicted for the next fifteen years will be suburban, a large proportion of this will be in the fringe areas.

Fifth, the development of the rural-urban fringe must be understood as one aspect of the larger suburban trend—a movement which, because of its explosiveness, Max Lerner calls "the suburban revolution." In two decades (1934-1954) the population of the United States grew by 25 percent; but the suburban population increased 75 percent.

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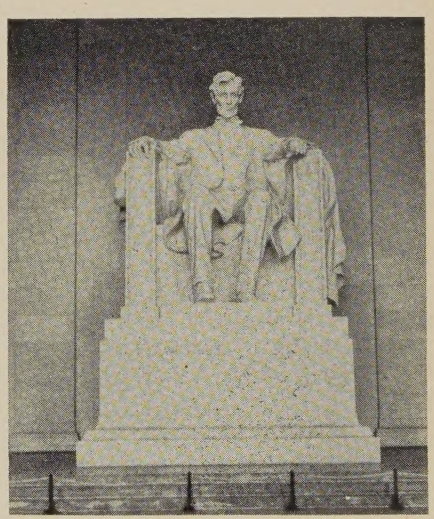

Photo by Dale W. Medearis

In This Issue

• The fifteenth session of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country was held at York, Pennsylvania, October 21-23, 1958. Starting in 1943, the Convocation has been held annually, with the exception of 1945 when war restrictions prevented.

• This issue presents a report of the addresses and digests of the deliberations of the various seminars and work shops.

• The Convocation is an informal type of assembly. All interested in the town and country church may attend. It brings together the persons most concerned so that they may worship together, educate one another and make plans and recommendations.

• The various recommendations made by speakers and commissions are made on their own responsibility, and are not official declarations of either the denominations or the state councils of churches or of the National Council of Churches.

• All interested organizations are urged to study, to use, to adopt or adapt what comes out of the sessions of the Convocation.

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February, 1959

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Sixth, because the rural-urban fringe is the meeting place of different types of American culture—or at least of divergent images of our culture—it exhibits many of the most acute tensions, contradictions and self-deceptions in our contemporary life.

It also exhibits what has become the characteristic method of resolving these tensions, which is not by synthesis, nor selection, but rather by the depressing way of homogenization. Sometimes one gains the impression that the result of the meeting of rural and urban cultures in the fringe is the accentuation of the worst features of both. But I suspect the more typical consequence is that each tends to annul and cancel the other out. The two are blended in such a way that the distinctive flavor of each is lost. This is homogenization.

A seventh fact (and this is the last I shall include in this incomplete list) will be clearly apparent to the reasonably objective observer. This is the extent to which the fringe community, despite the measure in which it contains in its variety so many of the ingredients of the slick-paper American dream, is in an extraordinary way a place of frustrated purposes and disappointed hopes. And I would add that both the character of these hopes and the manner of their frustration are data of great importance for the church. It is to this subject that I wish to turn for a few moments.

Spiritual Concerns and Contradictions

Every generalization concerning the fringe is quickly compelled to deal with the fact of the varied character of this area. To take one of the simplest manifestations of this variety, and one with high visibility, you have only to drive through a fringe area to see the great diversity of types of structure and sense the variegated life which they shelter. There are farm homes and farm outbuildings, and perhaps at the next crossroad a small factory. There are jerry-built housing developments, and not far away large houses on plots of several acres. There are trailer camps and modern motels and junk yards and "squatters" shacks. This variety of structure suggests the futility of attempting simple generalizations about the "fringe"—just as one cannot make facile comprehensive statements about an area that includes such diversity of occupation: farmers, local merchants, commuters to the city, employees in industries part way between the fringe and the metropolis, writers, and so on.

What are the forces and aspirations manifested in this type of social organization—or disorganization? And what is the outcome? What, particularly, happens to the aspirations?

Undoubtedly one of the drives behind the development of the rural-urban areas is what Max Lerner designates as "the folk-belief that the farmers form the nation's backbone and that there is somehow a healing grace and an elixir of sturdiness and integrity in contact with the soil, which are not to be derived from contact with the pavements." The alleged integrity of the country-dweller is frequently undiscernible. The sharp real estate developer who bulldozes the terrain, lays out minimum-size lots, and puts up a hundred identical jerry-built houses may be motivated by economic greed. But so is the farmer who sold him the land knowing full well what use he was going to make of it.

The rural-urban fringe may be a goal in the quest for more space for one's self and one's family. But space unoccupied by the opportunities for other human fulfillments is no boon. The new setting may, for exmaple, provide less privacy than a city apartment.

There is the hope of finding roots —of gaining a sense of belonging. The actual outcome is very often a disillusioning discovery of the migratory and impermanent character of the rural-urban population.

There is the desire for better schools for the children—and the discovery that in the rural-urban fringe the schools, like all other public facilities, may be grossly inadequate to serve the swollen population.

There is the hope of membership in a community, in contrast with the impersonal, socially irresponsible conditions of much city life. Here again there is likely to be acute disappointment.

Hopes of finding a place in a genuine community are defeated by the absence or inadequacy of community-making institutions and the dearth of essential communal facilities: churches, hospitals, libraries, good high schools, community centers, theaters, etc.

One of the most pathetic disappointments is the gradual fading of the hope cherished by many newcomers to the fringe area that in the new setting there will be a strengthening and renascence of family life. Here, it is expected, the family can find a common life of its own, released from the crowding, distractions and frenetic pace of the city. Before long, however, there comes the realization that "rurbia" presents its own problems and threats to the integrity of the family.

It would be absurd to deny, however, that in this setting many persons are finding enrichment of their life and renewed enthusiasm for the human adventure. Nor ought we minimize the fact that many of the inhabitants of the rural-urban fringe were there before it became a fringe; that many of them were pursuing what was for them a good way of life; and that one of the sources of tension in these areas is their belief —frequently justified—that this good life will be destroyed by the forces of urbanization.

The existence of the desires and hopes for which fulfillment is sought in the fringe areas, and the frequent frustration of these same desires and hopes are sign-posts pointing to the nature of the Church's ministry and task.

The Role of the Church

What is the meaning of the fringe area for the mission of the church?

1. First of all, it is a vivid reminder to the church that there is no ultimate salvation in locale. It would be absurd to contend that man as a living organism, rooted in nature, is not determined to a con-

siderable degree by his environment. But the church's primary concern is for man as man, not for the landscape. And man remains man in the midst of an infinite variety of scenery. Indeed the fact that he remains discernibly man in such a setting as the fringe area, which is neither rural nor urban, helps to clarify the task of the church.

Within the dimensions of this comprehensive responsibility there are, however, some special implications of the rural-urban fringe for the work of the churches.

2. For example, in this setting we see the radical irrelevance of Protestant sectarianism and the acute need of finding new patterns of ministry and action. Amid the human diversity, the scattered distribution of homes, the lack of social organization that characterize the fringe area, denominationalism is as anachronistic as a plan for the return of the little red schoolhouse to replace the consolidated high school. The churches must learn to be broad enough in their sympathy and to demonstrate the nature of Christian fellowship as unity in diversity—a diversity as rich as that of the area they wish to serve.

3. Third, the rural-urban fringe requires of the church that its ministry and lay leadership gain a large measure of sociological sophistication. There must be understanding of the complexity of the human interests and forces shaping the life of the area. Especially is there need for sympathetic understanding of the tensions between the new and the old. A typical phenomenon of the fringe is the resistance of long-time members of existing churches to the changes that are obviously required if these congregations are to serve the new community in the making. There is resistance to the demands of the younger people for a full-time minister, for a message more aware of the contemporary scene, for a parish house, for more varied activities. If these changes are effected, the resistance of the older people may express itself in the founding of new traditionalist and fundamentalist congregations. The rural-urban fringe demands a wise and psychologically sophisticated pastoral ministry.

4. Fourth, the church on the rural-urban fringe will need to engage vigorously in political and social action.

In this respect its task is not markedly different from that of many congregations in the central city. Whether the situation be one in which a community has been destroyed by decay, or one—like the fringe—where a real community has not yet come into existence, the essential fact is the lack of community.

5. Fifth, the church on the fringe is called to represent far more than it commonly does to the insurgent, nonconformist movements of the spirit. Despite the variety of housing, of employment, of income, of cultural background, the pervasive and lethal threat to the authenticity and richness of life in suburbia is the menace of conformity. It is not so much uniformity of custom and thought as it is submission to external standardizing influences that work insidiously inward and ultimately standardize the responses of the mind and heart.

The church is called to bring persons into the presence of the God who knows them by name. It needs to remind man that his God-given vocation is to be an alien and a rebel in the universe, and to teach him that a religion which seeks to "adjust" him to his environment and to extirpate the God-made insurgency from his soul is the enemy of the spirit.

6. Finally, if the church is to serve redemptively in the midst of the rapidly changing culture of the rural-urban fringe, it must understand more profoundly than it generally does the true nature of the "eternal verities"—the unchanging and timeless element in the life of man.

We have to recognize with a new seriousness that in this situation the simple moralisms and optimistic hopes that were the content of much Sunday school instruction in the past are not sufficient for these days. The children and young people crowding the church schools today will need a more resilient and sterner faith if they are to make any sense out of this generation of total hazard.

Many of you have read Nevil Shute's powerful novel, *On the Beach*. It describes how the people of southern Australia, the only place on earth where life remains after the next intercontinental war, await the certainty of extinction as the effects of radiation move slowly southward.

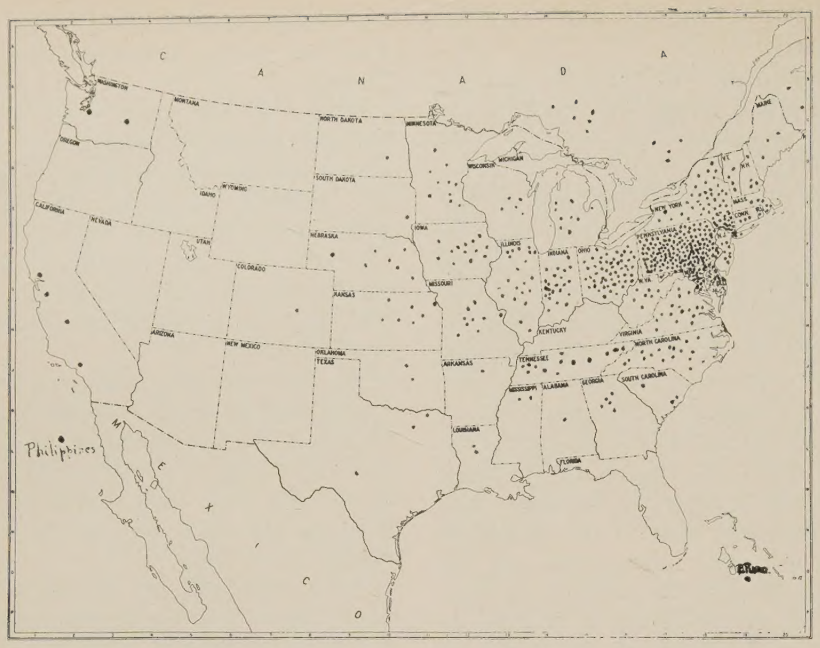
As I read this story and was deeply moved by it, I found myself thinking that our ability to confront —and to help our fellow-men confront—this very real possibility is perhaps the final test of the adequacy of our faith.

What can faith say to this potentiality of our culture? Do the churches have any word to address to this issue? Are we able to say, as did our fathers—but now with a depth of meaning that comes of facing the ultimate issues of life and death: "Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God?"

Can the communicators of faith sustain mankind in this extremity by imparting the knowledge that beyond the end there is still meaning, because God has entered into the strife and agony of man's life through Jesus Christ our Lord, has declared Himself for us, and because in Him only may be found a truth, a mercy, and a salvation that are indeed "from everlasting to everlasting."

Worship Services

• The worship services at the York Convocation were conducted by the Rev. Edward K. Ziegler, an ordained minister of the Church of the Brethren. Dr. Ziegler served for a number of years as a missionary in India. He has written widely on the subject of worship in the rural church. He has arranged many worship services. He arranged several for the Convocation. He conducted these in a spirit appealing to all the persons with varied religious experience who attended.



Convocation Registration

• Thirty-eight of the forty-nine states, Canada, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico were represented at the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at York, Pennsylvania, October 21-23, 1958. The map shown above and the tabulation below show the distribution:

New England States	22
Middle Atlantic	263
East North Central	115
West North Central	48
South Atlantic	48
East South Central	17
West South Central	9
Mountain	1
Pacific States	6
Canada	12
Philippines	1
Puerto Rico	1

Denominations

1.	Presbyterians	137
2.	Methodists	132
3.	United Church of Christ	87
4.	Episcopalians	64
5.	Evangelical United Brethern	41
6.	Lutherans	33
7.	Baptists	32
8.	Disciples	7
9.	Not designated and all others	10
		543

To All the Contributors

• The National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country can only be conducted with the cooperation of large numbers of people and organizations.

The Pennsylvania State Council of Churches, the York Council of Churches, local ministers and a local committee carried the many responsibilities which can only be cared for in the state in which we meet.

To all who so graciously contributed their time, talents and experience toward making the Convocation a success, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Radio and Television

From the Workshop Report

• The seminar considered a number of broadcasting possibilities and problems. The opening presentation pointed to the "why" of broadcasting, suggesting that we may literally go through closed doors with our deepest faith and that radio and television presents unique opportunities to go into the world with the Gospel, reaching the very people we have a call from God to reach. It was pointed out that the programming must be good radio and television as well as good religion and that we must realize that the circumstances of reception are completely different in broadcasting from the worship service in a church.

The seminar also considered the values of variety in radio and television programming. We must not depend utterly upon devotional broadcasts but must realize that interviews, discussion programs, musical programs, dramatic programs, newcasts—all these have values to reach the varying interests of listeners. Examples of the different program types were given through radio-taped recordings and television films.

Another accent of the seminar was a session on microphone and camera technique, emphasizing the importance of knowing how to use correctly a microphone and to have good camera presence.

Questions from the participants indicated a desire to know where radio and television resources could be obtained and these were pointed out, as well as shared, through some literature which was available.

The participants began to realize how important local broadcasting can be and how closely it may be related to the immediate Christian community. Information was shared concerning the Radio and Television Workshops to be held in different parts of the country during the coming year by the Broadcast Training Department of the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches.

CHARLES H. SCHMITZ
JOHN GROLLER

Town & Country Church

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Looking Toward the Future

ROBERT T. HANDY

• A church historian always wants to get into his topic by starting several thousand years ago and working along through the centuries so as to get things in proper perspective—even when he's charged with dealing with the future, but I will take you back merely to the late seventeenth century as a starting point. For at about that time there appeared two movements of vastly different nature which were to grow into massive and complex realities of world significance in the eighteenth century. One of these movements was that of renewal, of revival, of awakening within the Christian Church. The pietist and evangelical awakenings eventually gave birth to the globe-encircling modern missionary movement; their force has periodically been renewed again so that a sequence of renewal in Protestantism was established.

The eighteenth century, however, also saw the triumph of another vast movement of entirely different nature which we can call the movement toward secularization. The medieval and reformation periods had nourished the ideal of a Christian civilization in which civilization would be dominated by the Church. But in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the ideal of a religiously neutral, autonomous, "enlightened" civilization was planned, and a program for achieving it was laid out. In the Revolutionary period that climaxed the Enlightenment the program was put into effect.

In the contradiction between these two vast movements—inner renewal of the Christian churches and at the same time the shift from a Christian to a secularized civilization—lies many of the difficulties and tensions within the churches in past years and at the present.

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, however, many American Protestants were somewhat troubled as they saw where some of the secularization trends might be leading in the swift process of industrialization and urbanization. They launched a movement which I believe must be counted as one of the links in that chain of Protestant renewal. The movement they launched was a many-sided one which attempted to bridge the gap between an invigorated Protestantism and a civilization in which the secularization trend had begun to show some dangerous tendencies. The America they knew was one still massively Protestant in tone and habit and thought; their hope was to turn the inner vitality of Protestantism against some of the emerging undesirable features of American life in the hope of arresting decay and in the effort to Christianize a nation. Their's was a genuine renewal movement; perhaps it lacked the emotional heights of some of the earlier renewals but it was led by devout, earnest, serious-thinking men.

This early twentieth century movement of renewal was evangelical; it was Christocentric and sought guidance and strength from the Bible. It was also a socially-minded movement; it was concerned with arresting and reversing some of the trends of a secularized society and with Christianizing it. It was a cooperative movement that saw clearly that a divided Protestantism was unequal to the evangelical and social task before it. It sought to have the major Protestant bodies confer together for mutual clearance and joint planning, and to link these bodies in a federative unity that their resources might better be brought to bear on society. This renewal movement—evangelical, social, cooperative—brought to birth the Foreign Missions Conference of

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North America, the Home Missions Council, the Council of Women for Home Missions, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and many other agencies. The rural church movement in its modern form in America was distinctly a child of this renewal movement. The contribution of the rural church movement to Protestantism and to America has been a great one.

Twentieth century conditions have, of course, been in intense and dramatic change ever since the storm overtook Europe and involved the rest of the world in 1914. The full consequences of all this became ever clearer in this country in the 1930's. And in that dark decade there burst on the American scene another renewal movement within Protestantism, one quite different in tone and caliber from the one which had preceded it, one which felt itself much more relevant to the dynamically new conditions emerging in the stormy twentieth century. This renewal movement is complex, and has been known by various names; neo-orthodoxy, the theological revival, the ecumenical reformation, the theology of crisis, the resurgence of biblical theology, and so on.

The supporters of the renewal movement felt that the earlier evangelical-social-cooperative movement was too closely bound to the culture in which it grew up, and reflected too much the ideas and moods of that culture and not enough of the understanding of God, of man, and of the world found in the Bible and in classical Christian theology. The earlier renewal movement had hoped to Christianize the social order; the later one, schooled by war, depression, and the rise of the dictators until any hopes of easy progress had been swept away, saw this as somewhat utopian and idealistic. The earlier movement was Bible-loving, seeing the "Good Book" as a rich library of religious experience; the later one accepted the historical approach to the Scriptures but insisted that the Christian must read it also with the eyes of faith and that then its distinctive unity, uniqueness, and authority is clear.

The earlier movement was cooperative in approach, feeling that federation among denominations for specific tasks was adequate; the later one, anxious to deal with fundamental matters of faith and theology, has advocated what may be called the ecumenical way, the search for a deeper level of agreement at the level of theological first principles and a continuing search for the God-intended wholeness of the Church of Christ.

Not only has there been the emergence of a new phase in the sequence of renewal movements of Protestantism, there has also emerged some significant developments from the processes of secularization. The long-established trends toward fuller industrialization and urbanization continue in American life, with profound effect on both rural and city life. Mobility in our culture is still on the increase, and the cultural pluralism that has long been so conspicuous in metropolitan areas is becoming ever more familiar in town and country.

My thesis obviously is that the modern town and country movement, born in the renewal movement of evangelical, social, cooperative Christianity at a time when the process of secularization could still be viewed primarily as an emancipating movement, has come into a quite different theological and social situation. On the one hand, it can and should be proud of its past and its significant contributions to American Protestantism, and those of us who have gained some concept of its life are indeed grateful to it. On the other hand, the modern rural church movement must find its full role in the new situation. I will suggest five lines along which I believe the town and country movement can and should move into the future:

First, it seems to me that the town and country church movement (along with many other movements in American Protestantism) should press from the cooperative to the ecumenical approach. The ecumenical way is for Christians of various heritages and backgrounds to reveal themselves and their deepest beliefs to one another in the conviction that all can thus learn more about the riches of the eternal Gospel and find in fuller terms the unity that has been given in Christ. The ecumenical way is not to be content with finding minimum agreements in matters of faith but in seeking maximal ones, that the fuller glory of the Gospel of Christ may be more clearly exhibited. It begins from within and not from without; it seeks to combine the theological and the practical that both may be richer.

The ecumenical encounter has thus far been too much the privilege of national leaders and theologians; now is clearly the time for it to become more and more the experience of the local community. Is it possible that some of our community churches can become genuine centers of ecumenical concern, anxious to reflect more of wholeness of the church in their own communities? A local church is not ecumenical simply because it has representatives of many denominations in its membership; it is ecumenical as its members strive to make manifest their oneness in Christ. And at its present stage of development, the ecumenical movement needs very much the kind of ecumenical exploration at community and congregational levels that your movement may be peculiarly fitted to provide.

The second line along which the rural church movement may move into the future is along that of ever deeper concern for the church. Now, I am not suggesting that our focus ought to be primarily on the church as an end in itself, but rather that our emphasis should be on the purpose of the church. The church in any community situation should seek first the will of God made known through Christ for its life, and then it will find inevitably that it is driven to service in its community, but it will be able to bring into its service a unique dimension which can come from no other source if it does not convey it.

A third line for the future is that of wider attention to the town and country church in the whole world. Has there been an International Convocation on the Church in Town

nd Country? Can you learn some-hing about ecumenicity in your ocal church from the experience of arishes in the Church of South In-lia? Your movement has historically een much concerned with the con-ervation of men and soil; obviously oday such concern must be extended o the world scene if it is to have any ull meaning in our jet-shrunk globe. We are in a new era in which we nust think and work and pray to-ether on many common problems vith our Christian brethren from nany lands, and learn together how he church must meet this dynamic nd precarious world.

A fourth line of advance must be oward the solution of the plaguing roblem of diversity and unity. You f the church know very well that ll Protestants should feel respon-ible for the rural church. Should ot all movements such as yours onsider themselves as stewards of a articular concern for ecumenical rotestantism, and seek to act and peak insofar as possible in behalf f the larger Protestant world? Thus iverse functions would be fulfilled nd the diverse gifts which God has iven us find full employ, yet in the ontext of an overarching unity that an make the whole vastly better ecause the members feel themselves o be part of one body and serving ne head. To do your special work ut without ever losing sight of the whole—this is a line of advance for ll of us as we move into the future.

Finally, is not the church in town nd country called to focus much at-ention on the family, expanding its lready great concern here? The amily is more and more being torn apart in American life, with terrible effects on all concerned. Yours may be the arena from which can come a new determination to strengthen family life.

Historically the rural church movement has been deeply con-cerned with the farm; can it be that an important focus in the future is to be the family, both farm and non-farm? If the Christian family deteriorates, will not both church nd community deteriorate also?

The Church in the Rural-Urban Fringe

From the Seminar Report

• The fringe area is never stable. It is constantly changing because of expansion of the city and because of a desire on the part of the people to escape the pressures and fears of urban life.

The culture of the urban fringe is claimed to be marked by boredom, loneliness, and by divided loyalties. In a fringe community the long-time residents and the new families face each other with fear and resentment.

The church should try to make adjustments and meet the needs of both old and new residents. Perhaps a united ecumenical approach might be made by a local council of churches. By this means, political action, social study, and interpretation could be made. By planning and agreement it is possible to build a community where anyone is acceptable, regardless of race, nationality or creed. Here is a means of intergroup training, leadership, and a unified attack on social and moral wrong.

By facing the needs and problems of a community and of individuals, the necessity of cooperative approaches to a solution becomes evident.

The denominational community church is often an answer to the rural-urban fringe problem, but comity, stewardship education and whole-hearted participation, resulting in lay leadership, are important if we are to have success in this type of work.

Practical Suggestions

1. Comity arrangements, if a new church is to be built or a federation of churches effected.

2. Increased stress upon education for laymen within the local congregation, with two purposes in mind: a) to understand the Christian approach to daily problems; and b) to establish teams to visit the residents in an evangelistic approach.

3. A renewed effort to understand the life of man, stressing oneness through our common Lord, Jesus Christ.

4. A renewed effort to reach the youth of the area through Christian education and a planned program.

5. Support of home mission boards to churches in transition—to provide personnel for leadership training, census, and planning.

6. Formation of active local ministerial associations.

7. Signing of agreement cards in all church groups for non-discrimination, and publicity on this in newspapers and periodicals.

8. That the town and country and urban church departments of all church governing bodies consult and cooperate in planning for adequate churching of the Rural-Urban Fringe areas.

CHARLES GOLDEN, CHAIRMAN
CHARLES L. MCCOY, SECRETARY

A Prayer for Churches in Deteriorating Communities

• Almighty God, have mercy upon churches in communities that are losing their land to non-resident owners, where farms are tilled by short-term tenants, and where deteriorating houses invite transient and uprooted families.

Grant churches largeness of comprehension to grasp the nature of their mission. Teach them that loving thee and one another and loving the land fit together; that love to thee is not complete without regard to thy physical creation. In this conviction let churches encourage the use of land for the building of persons, families, and communities. *Amen.* —MARK RICH

The 1959 Convocation

• The 1959 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held at Louisville, Kentucky, October 20-22. From time to time announcements will be made in this journal concerning the plans.

Panel on Current Theological Conversations. Left to right: The Rev. James E. Hankins, Methodist, Rogersville, Tenn.; the Rt. Rev. Earle M. Honaman, Suffragan Bishop of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Diocese; the Rev. Dr. Wesley A. Hotchkiss, secretary for Christian Higher Education, Congregational Christian Churches; the Rev. Dr. Truman B. Douglass, executive vice-president of the Congregational Christian Board of Home Missions; and the Rev. Dr. Robert V. Moss, president of the Evangelical and Reformed Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pa.

Techniques of Making Church and Community Studies From the Seminar Report

• A house-to-house canvass is spoken of as a census. A census is usually part of a survey, but a survey is more elaborate and includes the findings and facts of many aspects of any community or area.

Arrangements for a survey should be made by a local committee in consultation with survey specialists. All implications should be considered, such as collection of data, tabulation of detailed facts and findings, and implementation of the report to the local committee by the person who is to interpret the findings.

There are many sources of information as to statistics and data available from the U.S. Census, state agricultural departments, and the National Council of Churches' Department of Research and Survey, as well as particular departments in the denominational organizations. The type of survey determines more or less the type of material to be used.

Techniques

The interpretation of the survey, and the recommendations that follow the gathering and tabulation of the data, are important. A survey is of little value unless this is done. The report should be in printed or mimeographed form so that it can be studied by individuals or groups.

In gathering data, be sure it is factual and not someone's opinion. One must be aware that in sources of material, the data is often limited in its overall information, i.e., the U.S. Census doesn't break down too much the characteristics of the small town. Get interpretation from county agencies.

It is important to "sell" the church the need to have a survey—too often they do not see their problems or the importance of doing anything about them.

It is important, also, for the survey to be re-studied every so often, for changes take place and a report could be outdated because of the many changes within the community.

A survey is not a panacea to church problems, but it does help one to see the problems a little more clearly. It is not enough to survey, however. There must also be implementation.

MARGARET TAMMEN
CALVIN J. LOGAN

Social Welfare Needs in the Community From the Seminar Report

• Care of older people, civil rights, Christian vocations, and an adequate educational program are some of the needs of a rural community which were considered by the participants of the seminar.

Mobility of the people in rural communities is a grave problem, an element that can destroy the Christian family. There is a great need for more sincere Christian love.

Responsibility of the Church

What is the task of the Church? How can the teachers, the church, the school, and the home become as one? We teach ideas and subject material but we do not teach people to apply these.

The minister may be the only professional leader who has a knowledge of the professional services that are available to people in need.

Some of the areas of need are as follows:

1. *Aged.* There is a need for these people to be kept busy and made to feel that they are important.

2. *Minority Peoples.* The church should endeavor to enlarge its ministry to these people as we find them in our communities.

3. *Migratory Labor.* The Christian ministry must broaden its scope on the level of the local church to meet the needs of all people in its community.

4. *Mentally retarded children and Handicapped People.* Here there is need for professional training, but referral is vitally important. Those who are blind or have poor sight may be able to receive "talking books."

CORNELIA RUSSELL
TOLLIE CAUTION

Churching Rural-Urban and Non-Farm People

From the Seminar Report

• Rural non-farm people are engaged in many occupations in various types of situations. Many live in small industrial or business towns; many drive as much as one hundred and fifty miles each day to and from their work; others are in resort towns. There are middle-class people, well-to-do people, and people living in the "rural-slum" areas.

If these people are to be effectively churched, there should be over-all planning—both denominationally and interdenominationally—for the areas in which they live. Adequate investigation of needs may indicate the desirability of the following:

1. Re-location of a church—because of expansion of community, movement of population away from the present church area, or inadequacy of site.

2. Establishment of a new church or mission in a growing area. The true spirit of comity should be observed in this case.

3. Development of a Group Ministry or a Larger Parish for a cooperative and integrated approach.

4. Consolidation or federation of churches in an over-churched area.

5. A ministry to diverse groups of people in the same church building at different hours. This is not ideal but it could be used as an entering wedge to reach different types of persons. (The old "union churches" of Pennsylvania have used this idea for many years.)

6. The "church in the home" technique, used so effectively in sections of Europe. People who do not attend regular church services might be reached by services in homes.

Time and patience are needed when any major adjustments in churching an area are undertaken. People should not be forced into new patterns; they often need to be educated as to the need and desirability of such re-adjustments.

When urban people move to rural communities, or farmers change to non-farm occupations, tensions easily arise. Old and new patterns of life come into conflict, i.e., respect for the Sabbath day tends to be undermined when both man and wife work away from home and must attend to some home duties on Sunday. Resentment occurs when newcomers become active in church and community life. A new sense of community is greatly needed in areas where radical changes are occurring.

The church needs to be understanding in such situations and develop means to overcome the difficulties. There is no substitute for personal contact. Christian love for each other will lead to adaptation of church programs, organization and techniques to meet the changing situation. Rotation of church officers and committees should help in making use of the newcomers. Neighborhood car pools may be used to bring people who would otherwise be unreached. Church school classes in homes might be established.

If rural non-farm people are to be reached and held by the church, the whole matter of the communication of the Gospel to them must be seriously reconsidered. We should not only "speak their language," but also change our approach so that the spiritual needs of the Rural-Urban and Non-Farm people shall be met.

CLAYTON A. PEPPER
BERYL B. MAURER

Worship Material From the Seminar Report

• This year the seminar concerned itself with the psychology of worship and with the use of traditional forms and liturgies as rediscovered and developed by nearly all denominations. The problem of music arose as it does nearly every year, for the rural church is poor in organists, pianists and choir directors. What is worse, its appreciation of hymns and suitable voluntaries and responses is low.

It was felt that the seminaries could give some help in this matter by training seminarians and their wives not only in music appreciation but in the techniques of directors and accompanists.

Interest was shown in the development of suitable services for special occasions and special days on the church and national calendars.

EDWARD K. ZIEGLER
DUFF TUCKER

Students from the Evangelical and Reformed Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, give dramatic presentation of the Rural Church Movement.

Churching Migratory Laborers

From the Seminar Report

In the Migrant Ministry the churches are united to serve men, women and children who are following the crops. This program is centered in the Christian faith and seeks to share that faith with the migrant, and to develop in him a sense of his personal worth, belonging and responsibility. It seeks to awaken the community to the opportunity and obligation of sharing equally all the protective benefits and warmth of community life. It challenges the local churches to include these seasonal neighbors in their concern and full fellowship. It calls on the state and nation to apply Christian principles to the economy in which migrants live and work.

—Purpose officially adopted December, 1953, by the National Migrant Committee

• This statement of the purpose of the Migrant Ministry points out to every minister and to every congregation that the church's mission lies only a few fields or a few miles away from their own doors, as there is no state without its migrant workers.

There are two responsibilities of the church to the thousands of migratory families who move across the land harvesting our crops, outcast, forgotten, in need to help. The church must bring its full content and its teaching to the individual migrant and to the groups of which he is a part. It must always strive to meet day-by-day needs, but beyond this immediate service there is the obligation to work out a migrant program to solve basic problems.

The seminar participants recognized that this aspect of the church's mission involves an educational process for the whole community: the church, growers, schools, health officials and all the groups and individuals who are ready to share their understanding, acceptance, and services.

What You Can Do

The group felt that ministers in town and country churches are faced with a continuing challenge to find more effective ways of including migrant families in their mission to the world. Some of the ways of meeting this challenge were recommended:

1. Efforts on behalf of the migrants need to be coordinated with the work of the council of churches, councils of church women, and the ministerial association.

2. Simple studies should be made of the types of migrants in the state and area, the times of arrival and departure, and the special needs of the various groups.

3. Whenever migrants live and work in the area, the minister and members of his congregation can welcome them in the church, can arrange for religious services in the camps, and can provide counseling, recreational and educational programs. The concern of all the pertinent agencies can be enlisted so that their services may be extended to include migrant families. Youth groups, under skilled leadership, can develop special projects. The various skills of volunteers can always be used.

4. As the concern of churches deepens, and seasonal staff is employed to help with programs in the camps, ministers and their congregations can interpret the service to growers and to the community as a whole, can prepare the way for the staff members and help them in their work.

5. When there are no migrants nearby, the minister can still have a dynamic part in this aspect of the mission, through sharing his information in schools of missions and by encouraging his congregation to assume their responsibility of sharing in the program of the Migrant Ministry.

6. The church must always pioneer. In its mission to migrant families it must bring the Christian message in all its depth and breadth. It must find unmet needs and demonstrate ways of meeting these needs. Then it can pass on the responsibility to the agency directly concerned and move ahead to new kinds of Christian service. There are many agencies ready to help migrants to a better way of life. These can be found at local, state and federal levels, so the church does not need to work alone.

7. As a part of its mission to mankind, the church can help each migrant to achieve his full potential "so that he may earn an honest livelihood and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding out his hand for charity. This is the highest step and the summit of charity's golden ladder."

MONICA OWEN

Lay Leadership
From the Seminar Report

• "It is through the laity that the Church has the greatest and most natural opportunity to show to the world that the message of the Bible and all that the Church is committed to be in obedience to its Lord, one relevant to the real needs of man. . . ."

(First Assembly of the World Council of Churches. 1958 at Amsterdam)

Lay witnessing is not an elective —it is an imperative if the church is to fulfill its mission. The church must keep before every individual this question: "What can I do to forward the mission of Christ and his Church?" The church should use all methods at its disposal to keep before every Christian the fact that he or she can do the work of an evangelist, that each person has a witness to share.

Lay people should take part in the worship services. Young people should be apprenticed as Junior deacons or trustees. Lay people should have proper recognition of their work—such as a letter or

ords of appreciation from the inister.

Groups should be formed for fel-wship and friendship in order to ltivate the newcomers in the com-unity. A "zone plan" should be rganized to take care of new pros-ects and to discern new talents.

Discussion groups for Christian y people of the same or similar oc-pations would be helpful. Here ey have an opportunity to discuss eir common concerns and prob-ms in light of the Christian Gospel.

Some evidences of a wide use of y people are shown by The Church rmy of the Protestant Episcopal hurch; the Zoe Movement in reece; the Kirchentag of Germany; ampaigns of Christ the King of e Roman Catholic Church; and e wide use of laymen by such roups as the Morman Church and hovah's Witnesses.

Louis P. Meyer
Thomas Wheat
A. Walker Hepler

Church Publications

From the Workshop Report

The main emphasis of this group as on the technical aspects of pub-shing a local parish paper, Sunday ulletins, midweek mailings, pub-city for special events such as evan-elistic meetings, and Vacation hurch Schools. Pointers on format, ontent, and how-to-do-it items were iven by the leader and a represen-tative from the A. B. Dick Company.

Samples of parish papers were resented with comments on appear-nce, readability, and ways of im-roving them being given. Some dis-ussion took place on types of pub-city that could be produced on a egional basis by a conference, pres-ytery, or synod.

"How to Plan and Publish a Mimeographed Newspaper" and a ibliography of books dealing with ublicity for the church and avail-ble in most libraries were distri-uted to the members of the group.

James Hankins
M. M. Bakos
Betty Jean Patton

Declining Population and Resources

From the Seminar Report

• Despite the fact that most areas of Church life are expanding, there are places where the opposite is true. Here, because of conditions largely economic—such as cut-over forest and depressed coal-mining areas—the Church faces any or all of the following problems:

1. Lack of population base and financial resources to establish or continue an adequate church program. This often leaves congregations weakened through emigration of its members, or of such important segments of its membership as young people or working men in their productive years. In addition, there are idle buildings and equipment and budgets insufficient to maintain and operate them.

2. Lack of leadership, both lay and ministerial, either because of ingrown and inflexible traditions which prevent adaption to the existing situation, or from the simple fact that church and community leaders are often those who for economic reasons must move on.

3. Depression of spirit among those who remain and feelings of defeatism, passive resistance and apathy because of the seeming futility of trying to carry on.

Unhealthy competition among the churches, each seeking to preserve its own life by any means at hand, and often the appearance of "sect groups" to take advantage of the situation and to further aggravate it.

Solutions to these problems are being sought from many directions. Some can come only within the local parish, whereas others must come from beyond it. There is always the hope that new techniques and methods may be devised, but real solutions will probably have to be more than either of these. Some efforts to deal with the problems denominationally are noted, especially among Lutherans and Northern Baptists, state councils have shown some action, notably in Wisconsin, and the National Council of Churches has attempted to offer its assistance through its Committee on Churching Sparsely Populated Areas, and its policy statement on the proper ratio of churches to community life. Other suggestions are:

1. Develop a strategy for a region which involves interdenominational planning to include areas of declining population and resources. Attempt to get established churches to recognize the problem and support a solution by developing a formula for determining responsibility for leadership in self-study and action projects.

2. Thoroughly marshall such resources as do exist and through imagination and hard work make the best of things. Do not overlook the advisability of planning into the future and of using community agencies and the state colleges and other state and federal helps.

3. Work to develop a spirit of enthusiasm and a sense of identification with the total Church among the remaining people of a declining congregation. The feeling of being an important outpost for the church helps dispell defeatism and apathy.

4. Establish a "parish conservation" plan, whereby efforts are made to replace members who have moved with new members, either from outside the community or within it. Perhaps the church can encourage land reclamation and restoration as well as resistance to combinations of lands and other resources which result in decrease of job opportunities. At the same time, efforts must be made to build families around the church and make it important to them.

5. Seek out a ministry for declining areas by using every means to persuade men and women to this vocation, to prepare and train them for it, and to support and encourage them in it. In addition, the churches

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may need to accept unusual and sometimes unique approaches to a ministry—group ministry, interchurch ministry, lay ministry—for such areas.

The factors of adaptability, willingness and ability to adjust to the situation, ingenuity, sincerity, commitment, and patience are all important in helping a church or the churches to serve and minister to an area of declining population and resources.

Some materials which may be helpful for further study in this field are:

1. "A Study of Low-Income Farm Families in Two Southern Rural Communities," Whitman and Lively. Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches of Christ. 1958.

2. Reports on the Conference on Northern Wisconsin Cut-Over Areas, Serge Hummon. Wisconsin Council of Churches. 1957.

3. Farm Population Estimates for 1958, Bureau of The Census. 1958.

4. Policy Statement on Interchurch Cooperation in Town and Country Areas, Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches. 1957.

5. "People and Agricultural Resource Adjustments," E. J. Neiderfrank. U. S. Department of Agriculture. 1958.

6. Miscellaneous information from denominational sources, the Rural Development Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Departments cooperating.

William Davidson
Richard K. Smith

Techniques of Evangelism

From the Seminar Report

• Much of the problem of present-day evangelism is brought about by confusion in the concept of what evangelism really is, and with ways of doing evangelistic work. Methods, though they have their important place, are never a substitute for the purpose and reason for evangelism.

The concept of evangelism includes every way of reaching outside the church to bring others to faith in Christ and membership in the church. It is our expression of the Gospel that permeates all we do in the church.

Christian education and evangelism are too closely associated to be separate. Any evangelistic approach which does stress continued growth as a Christian is entirely inadequate.

Church attendance and loyalty is of real importance because a lack of commitment on the part of church members is a stumbling block to the unchurched.

A clear understanding of the meaning of the Sacraments is a strong factor in evangelism. In churches where an understanding of the Sacraments is strong, there is a greater loyalty to the church and a deeper understanding of the meaning of worship together.

It was pointed out that an excellent time for church-related radio programs is early in the morning—around 6:00 or 6:30 A.M.

Methods and Programs

1. *Church attendance programs.* Church attendance and loyalty crusades extending over a number of weeks or months. Bring the unchurched with you. Friendliness and welcome by the "regulars." Importance of the worship service and its parts.

2. *Religious Surveys.* Systematic survey of town and township for church membership and/or preference of all families. Personal visit or telephone call. Combined with a genuine and warm welcome to enter into the life of the church.

3. *National Christian Teaching Mission.* The cooperative program of evangelism of the National Council of Churches. Survey, evaluation, action.

4. *The responsibility list.* Compile and maintain a listing of families and individuals who should be won to Christ and the Church.

5. *Visitation evangelism.* Fellowship or friendship evangelism to interest and involve others in the life of the church. This is being done by families, couples, individuals, or groups within the congregation.

6. *Special services.* Revival services, preaching mission, etc. The church is strategic, the missioner is important. It may seek to call others to commitment or seek to send the members out in their true role as witnesses.

7. *Regular services.* The pastor's unique preaching opportunity for calling people to commitment and re-commitment to Christ.

8. *Groups within the church.* Work groups, especially for men, to paint, repair, etc.; special small groups for study, prayer, discussion; existing organized groups within the church.

9. *Zone or undershepherd plan.* Geographical or other grouping of families in the community with a member of the church as "captain." For contacting newcomers, encouraging the interested and guiding the "shaky" member.

10. *Land and job placement.* A systematic program of bringing church-related families to available farms and jobs in the community.

11. *Inquirers' groups. Small* groups coming together to inquire honestly and simply about the Christian faith and membership in the church. It is designed and should be kept entirely for non-church people.

12. *Decision Day in the church school.* This and other techniques by teachers and church school officers to call youth to Confession of Faith and entrance into the membership of the church.

13. *Radio and TV—and Audio-Visuals.* Use of regular and special programs to reach the unchurched and the non-believer.

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Rural Development and Small Industries

From the Seminar Report

Economic and social changes in wn and country churches call for operative study, planning and ac- n at local, county, state and na- inal levels. The Rural Develop- ent Program of the U.S. Depart- ent of Agriculture proposes to give idance and technical assistance to lot project counties selected from nong those on the lower rung of e economic ladder.

The mechanization of agriculture d technological advances have ntributed to the displacement of illions of farm families. Others ve not been able to compete suc- ssfully and suffer from a sub- andard level of living. Obviously ie of the greatest needs of these eas is the opportunity for greater rnings. Industrial development ovides one medium through which e economic level of one-fourth of merica's five million farm families n be raised.

The basic problems raised by the minar were: 1) low levels of edu- tion and training in the skills of dustry; 2) low levels of participa- on of large segments of these eople in the organizational and in- itutional processes of community nctions; 3) the apathy and lethargy people who have become accus- omed to deteriorating economic onditions; 4) resistence to change nd conflict between those needing ie program of economic develop- ent and the power structure of ose who desire to maintain the atus quo; 5) loss of much of the otential leadership through out- igrations; 6) low level of effective adership and tenure of the min- try; 7) a religious climate which enies that the church has an active nction in economic and social ange; 8) lack of sufficient motiva- on to secure energetic and persis- nt effort to undergird an ade- uate program for development; 9) lack of awareness of the host of llies who would join forces and the ide scope of resources available; nd 10) a low level of communica- tion between the white and non- white population which hinders wholesome participation by the Negroes who so desperately need the benefits of economic development.

The basic need is for a cooperative approach toward the solution of these problems. The church has the largest voluntary membership of any organization of community life. The ministry has entree to almost every group. The laity and clergy should take an active part in bringing together those who can study, plan, and promote every activity designed to serve man's basic needs. Unfortunately, the religious climate is often such that the church or minister cannot effectively lead. One possible solution is that workshops and conferences on economic development be held at land grant colleges for leaders of every community group. Similar meetings might be held to instruct ministers in approaches to the problems posed by non-cooperative church groups.

Examples of successful development programs were given, such as the Monroe County, Ohio, story. Materials produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture were distributed with special attention being called to Rural Resource Leaflet No. 6, October 1958; Rural Resource Leaflet No. 1, May 1958; and to the report of the "Conference on Rural Development Program," held in Memphis, Tennessee, June 16-17, 1958. Copies of these materials may be obtained from *Rural Development Program News*, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

E. Colvin Baird
A. Eugene Cox
John Howes

How They Sang!

• The song services at the Convocation were ably conducted by Frederick Mathias and Wayne Thomas of York, Pa.

Audio-Visual Aids From the Workshop Report

• In the workshop on Audio-Visual Aids we discussed the need and the use of slides, filmstrips, motion pictures, phonograph recordings and tape recorders in the educational and promotional programs of the church in town and country areas.

Audio-visual aids should be used when they seem to be the best method available to accomplish the purpose desired and the choice of materials should be correlated to the purpose. They are valuable tools when used properly.

It was pointed out that they should only be used by trained and skilled teachers and operators who know the advantages and disadvantages of each one in performing specific tasks and reaching selected goals. This points up the necessity of conducting more workshops and training sessions, on the local or district level, to train parish leaders and teachers in the use of these tools.

Under the guidance and direction of Mr. Hobart Mitchell of *Chancel, Inc.*, we discussed the place of recorded music in the rural church as a teaching aid to church choirs and congregations, as a means of supplying good background music for public worship, and for preludes, offertories and postludes.

W. Francis Allison
Glenn F. Sanford

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14. *Simultaneous evangelism emphasis.* The SEE program idea is adaptable to community-wide and all-country use. All churches coordinating their programs of evangelism to make use of united publicity and unified outreach.

15. *Outpost Sunday schools and churches.* Establishing those in unchurched areas of the township.

16. *Communicants' Class.* The training and instruction of youth and adults as they prepare for church membership.

John Abernethy
Leslie Ross

The Church and Agricultural Policy

From the Seminar Report

• The group based its discussions on the statement, "Ethical Goals for Agricultural Policy," which was adopted and published by the General Board of the National Council of Churches. The seven objectives stated therein are:

1. Opportunity for the full and wholesome development of persons.
2. Preservation of the integrity of the farm family and the enrichment of rural family life.
3. The encouragement of voluntary association, cooperation, and mutual aid among farm people.
4. Conservation of nature's resources and their development for the legitimate uses of mankind.
5. Adequate and healthful diets for the world's growing populations.
6. Fair and reasonably stable levels of income for farm producers.
7. Recognition of human interdependence on a national and world scale.

It was the general consensus that paragraphs *one* and *seven* contain the heart of the statement.

The following questions arose, which were prompted by the content of the statement: Do cooperatives infringe upon the freedom of farmers? Is "vertical integration" the answer for the subsistent farmer? Is it possible for the church to deal specifically with "vertical integration"?

"Vertical integration" involves concentration of ownership and economic control. To quote Dr. Howard R. Tolley, a leading agricultural economist, "Vertical integration is the name which has been given to a rapidly growing system of agriculture where a single giant business firm or group of firms owns the commodity from the beginning of production until it appears as a consumer item in the retail store." It represents a greater threat to the freedom of the American family farmer than any or all of the federal farm programs thus far undertaken in the interest of sustaining farm income or adjusting farm production.

Rural Church Leadership

It was agreed that efforts should be made with the proper government agencies to find ways of moving farm surpluses to needy people abroad without destroying the economy of those countries.

It was also felt that the church must work with other groups in helping to develop a worthwhile and wholesome life. It should influence the government in developing sound economic policies which are good for all the people. There are Christian men in positions of leadership in farm organizations and we must challenge these men to carry out their Christian responsibility in areas of farm policy.

Ministers should have an active relationship to farm organizations. Each one should know the problems and be able to interpret them in the light of Christian understanding.

The recommendation was made that the statement, "Ethical Goals of Agricultural Policy" be incorporated into a study document which would be made available to all Protestant churches.

SHIRLEY E. GREENE
JOSEPH E. GROTTENTHALER
EUGENE H. TENNIS

Christian Education
From the Seminar Report

• The general underlying principles of Christian Education were considered: Program (including worship, instruction, recreation and fellowship, and Christian service); Organization—taking into account children, youth and adults; Materials; Equipment; and Leadership. It is recognized that these are interrelated.

Inasmuch as half the children of our nation are in town and country communities and will eventually move to urban centers, the church must prepare these young people to find their places as Christians in new and different situations.

Workers with children and youth need to have curriculum materials suitable for different interest and grade levels; be concerned that they get adequate public school education; be concerned about health, welfare, economics, recreation, job opportunities, vocational guidance, and other youth organizations—such as Scouting, 4-H Club, Future Farmers, etc.

The church should strive to have adequate teaching opportunities—such as properly graded Sunday school classes; youth organizations; worship opportunities; recreation; additional sessions; camping; Vacation Church School; family unit activities.

Suggested ways for achieving more adequate rural church programs under trained leadership include the Group Ministry or Larger Parish.

It was stated that of the 43,000 Boy Scout units, thirty-seven percent are in Protestant churches. There the administration is handled by the Department of Christian Education; the leadership comes from the church membership, chosen by the Church Board, and represented on the Youth Council. A Boy Scout belongs to a church. A film strip, "Scouting in the Protestant Church," is available from local Boy Scout offices. It explains the Religious awards, and of how every boy belonging to the church can get this award by working with the pastor.

In a general discussion of leadership recruitment and training the following points were made:

1. *Recruitment.* A committee should go over the church roll and see who has possibilities to fill leadership needs. The committee should go to these persons and tell them why they have been chosen. Training opportunities should be provided. They may mutually agree on a teaching period of a unit, a quarter, a year.

2. *Training.* Training may be formal, such as Christian Workers or Leadership Training Schools on the area, church or circuit basis; Laboratory Schools, Home Study Courses. Training may be informal

—such as workers' conferences, observation, week-end teams, clinics, consultation with pastor or trained person, church libraries.

The Indiana Plan of beginning with twelve, and gradually involving the whole membership of the church was suggested.

Six steps, used in Scouting, are suggested here for use in churches: 1. Call a meeting, by letter and personal follow-up of the committee; 2. Discuss qualifications of a good leader; 3. List names of possible new leaders; 4. Appoint subcommittee to get the new leader; 5. Make appointment with the prospect; 6. At least three persons to call on prospect to say, "You are the choice of the committee."

CATHERINE EZELL
ERNEST J. HOGAN

Comity and Cooperative Church Relations

From the Seminar Report

• The statement, "Interchurch Relations in Town and Country Communities," was adopted as the basis for the discussions. The various types of local church cooperation were evaluated—such as the union church, the federated church, the community church, and the larger parish. Some of the participants had had unfavorable experiences with the union church and the federated church. Others believed that the federated church was the best solution where two or more churches occupied a small village. The larger parish seemed to be favored where churches were in the open country and small village, in that each could retain its full denominational identity, and yet they could all be united to have a worth-while ministry and program, and could do certain things such as youth work together. The community church was looked upon with favor if the church could be led into the program of some on-going denomination.

There was considerable discussion of giving less emphasis to organization in the local cooperative efforts and lifting higher the spiritual emphasis: the why of cooperation, such as "What is the sort of ministry and program needed by the community?" and "How can the Christian faith be related to the whole of life?" We base cooperation on Christian fellowship.

There was a sense of urgency in the group that local church cooperation must take place in a more effective way in most of our town and country communities. It was felt that a discussion guide would be helpful.

Recommendations:

1. That the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches pursue the proposal of preparing a discussion guide for use in local communities interested in some possible comity action. The discussion technique of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service might be included or adopted.

2. That the National Council of Churches encourage the formation of community or local area councils of churches for the purposes of understanding the mission of the Church and planning and promoting such projects and programs in the interest of the Kingdom of God.

HENRY S. RANDOLPH
CLYDE N. ROGERS
MARTIN L. TOZER

Churching Coal Mining Industrial Areas

From the Seminar Report

• The problems facing the churches in coal-mining communities are many and perplexing. Some obstacles are obvious and easily discerned and analyzed; others are deep-seated and hidden. Evidences of the lack of consciousness of community are many.

Some of the emphases made during the discussions of the seminar are as follows:

1. The denominations represented in the coal mining areas have an opportunity to engage in a vigorous attempt to serve the miners through their churches.

2. New studies of the coal-mining communities and the churches should be inaugurated.

3. Ministers in coal-mining areas are in need of specialized training for their unique responsibilities.

4. A comprehensive type of church and community ministry will best express the Gospel and meet human needs in the mining camps.

5. Ministers in coal-mining areas need to associate with one another for sharing experiences, for fellowship, and for cooperative planning.

6. One of the important duties of the church is to teach its members and the people of the community to accept responsibility for improving community life.

7. Special attention should be given to church adjustment and planning to alleviate the inefficiency of competition and overchurching.

8. Denominational publication offices may well take into consideration the difficulty of communicating with the people of the coal-mining areas.

The church should develop a consistent Christian philosophy as to the proper place and function of the church in its community, and measure itself against that standard. It should make a strong bid for the miner's spare time. It should be helping to establish the Kingdom of God.

MARK RICH
ROSS BAILEY
EMMITT INSKO

From the Summation Address

RICHARD O. COMFORT

• In the Town and Country Church Movement we have completed the bend in a long, slow, gradual curve. We have seen—in the past fifty years—many changes of theological, social and economic climate. We have seen the church painfully and slowly make its adjustment and response to these changes.

In this Convocation we have had the help of two interested and concerned "outsiders," Dr. Robert Handy and Dr. Truman Douglass. These men with sympathetic and deep insight have helped us to see ourselves as others see us. The fresh insight we have received has been revealing, interesting and stimulating.

We have also taken a quick look at our past, with the help of the seminary students from Lancaster, Pa. We have learned much from our history and have been inspired by the courage, dedication and vision of our past leaders. Realizing that the past often rests a heavy hand on the present, we must press on toward the goal of adequately churching our country and our world with a program that will be comprehensive enough to meet the needs of all of God's children.

At our Convocations ten years ago there were sessions on "This is how we did it." The burning question was, "How do we get on with the job?"

Today we are interested in other things. We ask "why" questions and "what" questions.

Ten years ago the popular seminary groups dealt with techniques of getting the job done. Today the popular seminars deal with such topics as: Theology and Rural Life; Lay Leadership; and the Rural-Urban Fringe.

Today, for my three main points, I turn not to some of my sociological friends but to that great leader and statesman of the early Christian Church, who has even been accused of being an industrialist—a tent maker. I refer to Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul—the great missionary of the New Testament Church. A man who let nothing stop him in sharing with an unfriendly world his deep conviction that Faith, Hope and Love were the three important words and concepts that the people of his world needed to base their lives upon.

We must have Faith—faith in God; faith in our fellow man; faith in ourselves; and faith in the future of the Town and Country Church Movement and its many challenges.

If we are to meet the challenges that Dr. Douglass told us about when he described the growing rural-non-farm population group in the rural-urban fringe, the problems that the areas of declining population bring to us, and other situations in the town and country field, we must have at least three things: The facts about the situation; A statesmanlike plan for meeting the needs and problems; A method of implementing the plan. These three— and the most important of these is implementation.

In addition to Faith we must have Hope. We must have hope that is based upon Christian faith. This hope will help us to mediate the contagious joy of the Christian faith to the people of our world.

Of the three—Faith, Hope, Love —the greatest of these is Love. The transforming power of Christian love is one of the areas which demands much more research, understanding and translation into our day-by-day living. As children of God we are called upon to love God and our fellow man. This man, Paul, knew what he was talking about when he wrote that famous chapter on love.

There is love of one's fellow men as citizens of one world. Can men learn to live together in peace in our world? Upon what basis? Can the transforming power of Christian love help us to overcome the barrier of race, denominational differences, national boundaries and other things that so easily divide us? Social sciences can help us to see and clearly define our situation, but the transforming power of the Christian faith can redeem us from our sins and guide us in the paths of righteousness.

Let us consider the love of adventure. Our town and country people need to discover with us the excitement, thrill and adventure that comes to those who in Faith, Hope and Love seek to let their lives be transformed by the in-dwelling spirit of God.

It is our hope that at the next session of Congress the President of the United States will be requested and authorized to appoint another Commission on Country Life. What kinds of adventure would the report of such a commission bring to us? What new frontiers would it lift up and humble us because of past failures. Some would undoubtedly be frontiers such as:

The growing rural non-farm areas.

The large vacation and resort areas.

The areas of declining population.

The needs of the eighty to eighty-five percent of the people who live in the villages and rural areas of the world.

There is adventure to be found in a consecrated life working through the Church of Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is dynamic, revolutionary and transforming. Seeking to live by it can be the greatest of all of life's adventures. It is the faith to which we, our congregations, and our world, must give our loyalty, and our lives.

Editor's Note

• This is one of the very few instances in the annals of the journal when the amount of copy exceeds the amount of space in an issue. Therefore, the following Convocation seminar reports will be published in the March issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH:

Church Cooperation
Recruiting for Church Vocations
Town and Country Commission on the State Level